

CLARK COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Board of Trustees Annual Report

2003

Pursuant to Title 27.24 of the Revised Code of Washington and based on information supplied by Maria Sosnowski, law librarian, the Board of Trustees of the Clark County Law Library makes the following report to the Clark County Commissioners. This annual report covers the period from August, 2002, through July, 2003.

I. Library Services

The library serves 13 judges, a magistrate, 3 court commissioners, 500 or more Clark County attorneys as well as attorneys from other counties and Oregon. Numerous law clerks, interns, paralegals, law and other students and the general public depend on the library's specialized collection. County, city and state officials are frequent library users. The library also provides interlibrary loan services to the Clark County Correctional Library and other libraries on an as-needed basis.

II. Collection

As of July 31, 2003, the Clark County Law Library had approximately 19,200 volumes, 3,000 supplements and advance sheets not attached to individual volumes, and 7,000 microfiche. The library also has Washington State Supreme Court Briefs, individual local court rules, and the periodical Jury Verdicts Northwest.

The law library currently subscribes to the following internet resources: Shepard's citations, and LOISLAW. LOISLAW has databases for Oregon, Washington, bankruptcy, and various federal materials.

Currently, 60 books are on the missing book list. This does not include missing books that have been replaced. Outdated items that would have been discarded due to age have been removed from the list. In the past, the library has been able to replace several missing items at no cost from various listserves that the librarian belongs to.

III. Library Improvements

A. Books and other print material:

As reported in 2002 and earlier years, the Library is still experiencing disproportionate inflation in subscription costs. West Publishing accounts for approximately 70% of the book budget, and has had constant increases in prices, ranging from 10 – 20% most years. Due to some selective cuts during the year, and some items that were not cut but were sent back to the publisher this year, the library is able to avoid further cuts to the 2004 budget.

Due to our financial problems, the library has been unable to make new acquisitions unless they are very low cost or from the Bar. The only titles added in the past year, other than Continuing Legal Education books and Bar Deskbooks, were donated to the library. This year we received donations of Martindale-Hubbell from Stoel Rives in Portland, and 5 CLEs from Laurie Wyrick at PUD.

In addition, 27 Continuing Legal Education books have been purchased, and several were acquired free from the Clark County Bar Association. The library continues to receive state Supreme Court briefs from the State Law Library, and Jury Verdicts Northwest/Northwest Arbitration from the Superior Court Administrator.

B. Database and Computer Improvements:

The Library discontinued all CD Rom services and moved to internet providers. This is due to increases in the cost of CD Rom products as compared to internet products. Publishers are also reducing the number of titles available on CD Rom in favor of internet access. The library replaced CD Law from Lexis and the Oregon databases from West with an internet contract with LOISLAW and with internet Shepards. This will result in a wider range of materials being available for a very slight increase in our current costs. However, the product is not as complete as the items replaced. Additionally, the costs of these two products don't increase as much each year as the CD Rom products did. Unfortunately, the library does not have printing ability for the public computers. This means that when patrons find something, they must locate the books and make photocopies. There are many things on the computers that are not in our books, so patrons have no way to print out that information. The library is considering options for this.

IV. Library Challenges

A. Space:

The library has effectively run out of space. All duplicative materials have been discarded. This year the library also discarded a lot of materials that are not used as often as other items in the collection, resulting in inconvenience for patrons who need the information. In addition, every spare foot of shelf space is being used as infill, although this can result in incongruous shelving adding difficulty for people unfamiliar with the collection. More reporters have been shifted up to the very top shelf, out of reach of stools, which requires a patron or

librarian to roll a ladder over to retrieve those books, quite an inconvenience for those doing research.

The library is now to the point of being forced to discard useful but lesser-used materials to make room for expanding reporter series. Space, as well as cost, is considered in deciding which items to add to or cut from the budget.

The main holding of the law library is case reporters. At the current rate, we have room for 2.5 more years for the Pacific reporter, 3 more years of the Federal Supplement, and 2.5 more years of the Federal Reporter. These reporter series are vital resources for the law library that would cause great hardship to the community if they were discontinued. The law library simply must have more space. In order to continue these series, we will have to stop getting other items, or throw out more materials that cost thousands of dollars to acquire in the first place.

B. Finances:

While library revenue has historically increased only about 4% per year, library expenditures have risen much more. Book costs increase 10-20% or more per year. This means the library has been unable to purchase new materials and had to make significant cuts to the collection to balance the budget for 2001 through 2003. For 2004, we are able to balance because we have made some judicious cuts during 2003, and because some indexes and other items were returned this year to save money. We have also placed some subscriptions on a rotating renewal system, where they are updated every few years instead of every year. While this is not as desirable as having fully updated materials, it is one way the library is trying to stretch our revenue.

The library has looked for means to increase revenue. In 2002 the library began charging attorneys an annual fee for the privilege of having after hours access cards. This raised about \$5,500 in 2002, and will raise about the same amount in 2003, and also enhanced library security by allowing us to disable hundreds of unused and lost cards. Meanwhile, there are no predictions for increased revenue. Library staff testified numerous times over the past several years to try to gain passage of a bill that would increase library revenue, but so far those bills have not passed. The County Bar Association has a Law Library Committee that has been working on trying to get law firms and individuals to sponsor various titles in the law library, and to increase awareness of the Law Library's need for donations.

V. Use Statistics

A. Circulation:

Non-reserve books may be checked out on the honor system by judges, lawyers, and county officials. From August, 2002 through July, 2003, 702 items were checked out. One item was sent and 7 items received through interlibrary loan during this period. Due to the limited collection, the library borrows far more than it lends. Nearly all of our interlibrary loans come from the State Law Library, due to their large collection and policy of not charging for this

service.

B. Reference and semi-reference questions:

The library answered 2,857 questions from August, 2000, through July, 2001, which is an average of 16 reference questions per day. This is a 13% increase in the number of reference questions from the 2002 report. In addition, there were numerous non-reference questions. Approximately 83% of questions are from non-lawyers, and 17% are from lawyers.

C. Inmate Requests:

During the period covered by this report, the library received 19 documented inmate requests, many of which ask for multiple items to be copied.

The law library provides the county a service by answering these requests. The library does not receive any county funding to pay for the time or materials to handle inmate requests.

VI. Financial Report

2003 January – July

EXPENDITURES

Salary	\$8,582
Employee Benefits	4,751
Books & Supplies	33,865
Telephone	142
Temporary Employment	8,895
Computer Maintenance	0
Association dues	151
Equipment	0
Furniture	0
Deferred items	1,556

<u>Total</u>	\$57,942
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REVENUES

District Filings	\$17,951
Superior Filings	61,018
Interest	470
Copico	119
Keycards	5,253

<u>Total</u>	\$84,811
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Please note the revenues are always ahead of expenditures at this point in the year as the library has a lot of year end bills due, and the revenue report is current each month while the expenses tend to run a month behind. This year in particular, due to accounting issues while the law librarian was on leave, the expenditures are roughly two months behind.

2002 January - December

EXPENDITURES

Salary	\$27,503
Employee Benefits	7,539
Books & Supplies	83,179
Telephone	315
Temporary Employment	1,835
Computer Maintenance	0
Association dues	151
Equipment	1,189
Furniture	66

Total \$121,777

REVENUES

District Filings	\$31,306
Superior Filings	94,634
Interest	1,063
Copico	205
Keycards	5,657

Total \$132,865

Please note that our reserve account got too low and so for the 2003 and 2004 budget we have tried to be very conservative in order to ensure that the account increases a bit to a more comfortable level. Due to fluctuations in monthly expenses and revenues, as well as unexpected price increases or equipment costs, the library needs to have a healthy reserve account. Also, since we started placing some items on a rotating update basis, we need to build up reserves for the future planned purchases to update the items. The 2002 year end figures were surprisingly good because both district court and superior court revenues exceeded expectations. Some years filing fee revenues go up, sometimes they are about the same, and sometimes they actually go down.

As an example of the need for a strong reserve account, in October 2002 the Law Library account was not credited with Superior Court revenue. While the County corrected that mistake the following month, it's a good example of why we need a reserve account. Typical Superior Court revenue is about \$8,000 per month. Our monthly expenses vary quite a bit as well. In the past year we have had months where the expenses totaled anywhere between \$6,000 and \$15,000.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees by

Judy Zeider, Chair

Date